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Chairman: Mr. MacKay ..... (New Zealand)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

Contents

Agenda item 126: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus

Agenda item 133: Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

Other matters

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 126: Financing of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (A/58/718 and A/59/734)

1. **Mr. Sach** (Acting Controller), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the financing arrangements for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (A/59/718), said that the Secretary-General sought additional resources of $1,898,800 for appropriations, reflecting the identified additional requirements of $4,464,600, minus savings of $2,565,800 as a result of the reduction in the size of the Force from 1,230 to 860 personnel. The additional requirements related to cost parameters for civilian police, international staff, national staff, facilities and infrastructure, and ground transportation and medical items. The civilian police requirement reflected revised subsistence rates for national and international staff and the requirement of $1.4 million for facilities and infrastructure comprised two elements, one of which was an amount of $709,500 for emergency repairs to buildings. The total appropriation included an amount of $706,500 to be funded by voluntary contributions from the Government of Cyprus. The Secretary-General was also seeking an assessment of $1,192,300.

2. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/59/734), said that the Advisory Committee was becoming concerned about a potential proliferation of requests for revised estimates for stable peacekeeping missions. It had previously stressed that requests for revised appropriations should be made only in exceptional circumstances. In view of the relatively small amount being requested and the ongoing discussions with the host Government concerning accommodation for troops, the Advisory Committee recommended that any necessary additional requirement for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) should be included in the next performance report.

3. **Mr. van den Bossche** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and, in addition, Liechtenstein and Norway, said that changing cost parameters and the relocation of military personnel had had a significant impact on the original cost estimates for UNFICYP and had outweighed the savings achieved by the downsizing of the Force. Whereas the changing cost parameters were relatively understandable, that was not the case with the relocation of military personnel, which would have some additional financial implications for the next budget cycle. He therefore agreed with the Advisory Committee that UNFICYP should be encouraged to absorb the cost overruns.

4. **Mr. Mavroyiannis** (Cyprus) said that his delegation fully aligned itself with the statement made by Belgium on behalf of the European Union. His Government remained fully committed to its obligations under article 19 of the March 1964 Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Cyprus concerning the status of UNFICYP, which did not include alterations and renovations for the enhancement of premises. In addition to its voluntary contributions, his Government had been providing for the routine maintenance of UNFICYP facilities as well as for materials, equipment and services. In response to a note verbale received from UNFICYP in November 2004, his Government was taking all necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of the facilities provided to the Force and would do its utmost to find a swift and satisfactory solution to the matter, in consultation with the Force and with the United Nations.

5. **Mr. Torres Lépori** (Argentina) said that his delegation also wished to maintain the standards of security and maintenance at UNFICYP and would therefore work in a positive spirit during the informal consultations to ensure that the Force had the necessary resources to perform its work effectively.

6. **Ms. Attwooll** (United States of America) said that it was unclear why the General Assembly was considering the request for UNFICYP during the first part of its resumed session, rather than during the second part. Her delegation agreed with ACABQ that requests for revised appropriations should be made only in exceptional circumstances and would be grateful if the Secretariat would provide detailed information about the status of agreements between UNFICYP and the Government of Cyprus, specifically

with regard to the arrangements for accommodation of troops.

7. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that his delegation fully agreed with the recommendation of ACABQ that requests for revised appropriations should be made only in exceptional circumstances and that any necessary additional requirements should be included in the performance report. It also endorsed the comments made in paragraph 5 of the Advisory Committee's report. It would be useful to clarify the legal obligations of the Government of Cyprus under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and the status of negotiations between the Government and the United Nations. It would also be helpful to know why the United Nations could not wait for the Government of Cyprus to agree to provide appropriate facilities for the military accommodation of UNFICYP. The Secretary-General should expedite the negotiations with the host Government on the relocation of military contingent personnel.

Agenda item 133: Financing of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (A/59/692 and A/59/728)

8. **Mr. Sach** (Acting Controller), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the financing arrangements for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (A/59/692), said that the additional resource requirements of $37,404,100 reflected additional costs to be partially offset by savings of $3,630,000. There was consequently a need for an additional appropriation of $33,774,100 which would need to be assessed, in addition to the amount of $264,625,200 already appropriated. The requirements arose from costs relating to salaries and benefits for military liaison officers, international staff, national staff, and air transportation requirements. Substantial changes in salaries of national staff had resulted from a survey that had changed the salary scale by 30 to 40 per cent.

9. With respect to assessment, the current financing situation was not satisfactory. Although a total of $55 million in loans from closed peacekeeping missions was available to maintain the operations of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), of the $141 million in contributions payable as of 1 January 2005, $132 million was outstanding. The question of assessment was therefore very important.

10. **Mr. Saha** (Vice-Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/59/728), said that the additional request for UNMIK was due to a change in a number of cost parameters, including mission subsistence allowance rates, salaries for national staff and the decline of the dollar against the euro. The costs of an air operations contract effective 15 September 2004 had also been included. Although the Secretariat had proposed to absorb a portion of the additional costs, it could do more, especially in the area of operational costs. Further efforts should be made to reduce the costs of air operations and to redeploy funds available under other operational heads. Any shortfall that remained as a result of the increased cost of the new contract could be included in the next performance report of UNMIK. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended an additional appropriation of $30 million for UNMIK for 2004-2005, which was $3.8 million less than the amount requested by the Secretary-General.

11. **Mr. van den Bossche** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey), the stabilization and association process countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), and, in addition, Liechtenstein and Norway, agreed that efforts should be made to absorb the increased requirements of $386,000 under air transportation. A guiding principle should be that unbudgeted costs related to travel, maintenance of facilities and infrastructure and acquisition of vehicles, communications and other electronic data-processing equipment should be absorbed. The performance report of UNMIK for 2004-2005 would be a test in that regard.

12. **Ms. Attwooll** (United States of America) expressed alarm at the increase in the costs of UNMIK, which were largely due to revised mission subsistence allowances and revised salary scales for national staff. While her delegation generally encouraged the Secretariat to streamline the information it provided the General Assembly, in the case of UNMIK greater effort should have been made to explain the rationale for such increases during the Committee's informal consideration of the item.

13. Her delegation was concerned at the increasing tendency to request the Committee to revisit peacekeeping budgets throughout the year. Although it was understandable that certain circumstances might require that the General Assembly consider requests for funding adjustments outside the normal peacekeeping budget cycle, greater efforts should be made to reserve all other requests until the second part of the resumed session. The current piecemeal approach further confused the state of peacekeeping financing and raised questions about the ability of missions to manage their budgets effectively. The approach also served as a reminder that in view of the recent substantial increases in peacekeeping budgets, greater efforts must be made to achieve efficiencies within those budgets.

14. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that requests for revised appropriations should be made only in exceptional circumstances and that greater efforts should be made to absorb unbudgeted expenditures, including through reprioritization. While it was true that information on possible overexpenditures or underbudgeting had not been available by the time the budget had been submitted, most of the information on cost increases had been available during the budget debate in May 2004. His delegation wondered why that information had not been conveyed to the Committee. The Secretariat should also elaborate on the need for increases in the United Nations salary scale and on how much of the additional requirement of $8 million for international staff was attributable to the conversion from 300 series contracts to 100 series and how much was attributable to the increase in mission subsistence allowances.

Other matters

15. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee), responding to the question raised at the Committee's previous meeting by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic concerning the overcrowding of the Secretariat building during the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, said that the celebratory nature of the event had been due to its having marked the 10th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, and the 30th anniversary of the First World Conference on Women.

16. In its resolution 2004/57, the Economic and Social Council had decided to invite, on an exceptional basis, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that had been accredited to the Fourth World Conference on Women or to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, in addition to those delegates who normally attended the Commission's sessions. All the necessary planning had been done in preparation for the session.

17. **Mr. Henn** (Officer-in-charge of the Security and Safety Service), also responding to the question posed by the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, said that participants at the Commission's forty-ninth session had been briefed on evacuation procedures, which had also been reviewed in preparation for the session. Moreover, additional safety patrols had been carried out, special identity cards had been issued, and participants had been pre-registered. Access had been granted to participants who were not staff members or delegates only after screening of the individuals and their personal belongings.

18. **Mr. Elji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation was not concerned about the large number of delegates per se, but about whether the Secretariat had taken into account the operational capacity of the Secretariat facilities during its preparations for the session.

19. **Ms. Kang** Kyung-wha (Republic of Korea) said that the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women had been exceptional and a major logistical undertaking due to the number of delegates attending. In preparation for the session, consultations had been held with the Bureau of the Commission, the Secretariat, and the security, protocol and conference services. Every aspect had been taken into consideration, including access, security passes and the capacity of individual meeting rooms and of the Secretariat building itself. Although less than half of the approximately 6,000 registered members of non-governmental organizations had actually attended, there had been a number of high-level governmental delegations. Thanks to the preparatory consultations, the session had been very successful. However, the Commission wished to apologize for any inconvenience caused to other United Nations bodies.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.